

Published and Copyright (c) 1999 - 2013
All Rights Reserved

Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

Fred Horvat

To subscribe to A-ONE, change e-mail addresses, or unsubscribe,
log on to our website at: www.atarinews.org
and click on "Subscriptions".
OR subscribe to A-ONE by sending a message to: dpj@atarinews.org
and your address will be added to the distribution list.
To unsubscribe from A-ONE, send the following: Unsubscribe A-ONE
Please make sure that you include the same address that you used to
subscribe from.

To download A-ONE, set your browser bookmarks to one of the
following sites:

<http://people.delphiforums.com/dpj/a-one.htm>
Now available:
<http://www.atarinews.org>

Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!
<http://forums.delphiforums.com/atari/>

=~::~~==

~ Grand Theft Auto Delay ~ People Are Talking! ~ Google To Appease EU!
~ Twitter Has 2nd Outage ~ Steam for Linux in Beta! ~ No Wii U Price Cuts!
~ THQ Is Dead and Gone! ~ Microsoft Patent Suit! ~ Hack Threat Warning!

~ Google Hacking Prizes! ~ Facebook To Save Gay Dog ~ Office 365 Released!

```

    - * How China Justifies Attack! * -
    - * CNN Temporarily Blacked Out in China * -
- * Apple: New iPad Has Double Storage Capacity * -

```

$$= \sim = \sim = \sim =$$

```
->From the Editor's Keyboard           "Saying it like it is!"
   " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " "
```

At the moment, it's the first of February and we currently have no snow on the ground! Note, I said currently. We've had snow; and we've had arctic temperatures lately, but it's nice to not see snow for a change!

I don't have much to say this week, hence the weather report. I could talk some politics, but it's the same old thing in Washington for the time-being. So, let's get to the news and this week's issue, shall we!

Until next time...

$$= \sim = \sim = \sim =$$

```
->In This Week's Gaming Section - Elected Officials Continue to Blame Games For  
Violence!  
    " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " "  
                                Nintendo Rules Out Wii U Price Cuts!  
                                THQ Is Dead And Gone!  
                                And much more!
```

$$= \sim = \sim = \sim =$$
[illegible]

Elected Officials Continue to Blame Games For Violence

Gamers have no credibility in this argument.

Update: Senator Yee's chief-of-staff, Adam Keigwin, responded to our inquiry with a phone call. He wanted to note that Senator Yee's choice of words wasn't the best: It wasn't the most artful thing he ever said. He also said that, although the Senator was quoted accurately, his statement

was in the context of the gaming industry; the quote was not directed at individual gamers.

His chief-of-staff noted that he himself is a gamer, as well as other staffers in the Senator's office, and even the Senator's children.

In short, Yee feels that the gaming industry doesn't have credibility, but rather a vested interest in continuing the status quo, as violent games are successful. As such, their position isn't relevant in this debate. Rather, the Senator wants to know what's the science? behind any correlation between violent games and violent acts.

Our original story is below.

In the wake of the tragic shooting at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut, politicians from across the spectrum have been sounding off on what they think the various causes of violence in the United States are. President Obama himself requested Congress fund a study on violent video games, otherwise leaving the entertainment industries on their own to continue unabated.

But that hasn't stopped other vocal politicians from getting in on the action with a finger squarely pointed at violent video games.

In a piece in the San Francisco Chronicle, California State Senator Leland Yee (Democrat) was quoted as stating: Gamers have got to just quiet down. Gamers have no credibility in this argument. This is all about their lust for violence and the industry's lust for money. This is a billion-dollar industry. This is about their self-interest.

Leland Yee is perhaps best known in gaming circles for AB1179, a California state bill written in 2005 and designed to require violent games to be labeled as specified [in the bill] and would prohibit the sale or rental of those violent video games, as defined, to minors. The bill would provide that a person who violates the act shall be liable in an amount of up to \$1,000 for each violation. The bill passed the state legislature and was signed by the governor, but overturned by the Supreme Court of the United States.

Newly-elected Connecticut Senator Christopher Murphy (Democrat) is also getting in on the act. As The Washington Examiner points out (via GamePolitics), Murphy stated (in the video below) that there's a question as to whether [the Sandy Hook shooter] would have driven in his mother's car in the first place if he didn't have access to a weapon that he saw in video games that gave him a false sense of courage about what he could do that day.

In the United States, the content of video games regardless of how violent or offensive is considered to be protected under the First Amendment, as is the case with other media. The Amendment reads, simply:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peacefully assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

As noted above, the Supreme Court overturned Yee's violent video game law, citing the First Amendment. As pointed out by the Chronicle, the majority opinion read, in part: Like protected books, plays, and movies, [video games] communicate ideas through familiar literary devices and features distinctive to the medium. Any demonstrated effects [from video games]

are both small and indistinguishable from effects produced by other media.

Nintendo Rules Out Wii U Price Cuts

\$300 AND RUN: Nintendo's president ruled out price cuts for its new Wii U as a way to boost sales, even after a subpar performance during the holiday shopping season. The Wii U sells for about \$300 in the U.S.

RISE OF THE PHONE: Game machine sales have suffered as consumers play more games on smartphones and tablets.

PROFIT PROMISE: Nintendo expects an operating loss of 20 billion yen, or \$220 million, in the year ending March 2013. But Satoru Iwata made a "commitment" that Nintendo would post operating profit of more than 100 billion yen in the year ending March 2014.

Sony Likely To Unveil Next PlayStation on Feb. 20

Sony is poised to unveil the next PlayStation game console on Feb. 20, a date that would give the Japanese electronics company a head start over Microsoft's expected announcement of an Xbox 360 successor in June.

Sony Corp. invited journalists to an evening press event in New York City. The company has not said what it plans to show off, but signs indicate that it'll be the PlayStation 4. Sony would only say that it "will deliver and speak about the future PlayStation business."

Such a console would follow Nintendo's Wii U, which launched last fall, and precede Microsoft Corp.'s next Xbox game console, which will likely be unveiled in June at the E3 video game conference in Los Angeles.

Wedbush analyst Michael Pachter said it's a "super smart" move for Sony to pre-empt Microsoft. This way, the PlayStation 4 will get the spotlight without much competition.

The currently available PlayStation 3 went on sale in 2006, a year after the Xbox 360. But Xbox 360 has been more popular, largely because of its robust online service, Xbox Live, which allows people to play games with others online. The Wii is still the top seller among the three consoles, though it has lost momentum in recent years.

The Wii U was the first of the newest generation of video game consoles to launch, but sales so far have been disappointing. Nintendo Co.'s president, Satoru Iwata, acknowledged recently that the Wii U and the handheld Nintendo 3DS didn't do well over the holidays, but he ruled out a price cut for the new console.

All three console makers are trying to position their devices as entertainment hubs that go beyond games as they try to stay relevant in the age of smartphones and tablet computers. Such hubs can deliver TV shows, movies and music. The Wii U has a TV-watching feature called TVii. With it, the console's touch-screen GamePad controller becomes a remote control for your TV and set-top box. TVii groups your favorite shows and

sports events together, whether it's on live TV or an Internet video service such as Hulu Plus. And it offers water-cooler moments you can chat about on social media.

THQ Is Dead And Gone

We've been covering the ongoing THQ apocalypse all day, and the publisher's demise is now official. Follow the links below to catch up on individual news stories surrounding the future of THQ.

CEO Jason Rubin sent out the following letter to all THQ employees today:

To All THQ Employees:

We now have the answers we've been seeking through our financial restructuring and Chapter 11 case. While much will be written, here are the facts of the bids and auction that occurred:

Yesterday morning, we received a competing bid for the operating business, along with Clearlake's offer, and numerous offers for separate assets. During an auction process that lasted over 22 hours, the final conclusion was that the separate-asset bids would net more than a single buyer for the majority of the company.

Shortly, we will present the results to the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, which must concur with our assessment.

The proposed sales of multiple assets is as follows :

- Sega agreed to purchase Relic
- Koch Media agreed to purchase Volition and Metro
- Crytek agreed to purchase Homefront
- Take 2 agreed purchase Evolve
- Ubisoft agreed to purchase Montreal and South Park

We expect these sales to close this week.

Some assets, including our publishing businesses and Vigil, along with some other intellectual properties are not included in the sale agreements. They will remain part of the Chapter 11 case. We will make every effort to find appropriate buyers, if possible.

What this means for employees

We expect that most employees of the entities included in the sale will be offered employment by the new owners. However, we cannot say what these owners may intend, and there will likely be some positions that will not be needed under the new ownership. You should receive notice this week or early next week if the new owners intend to extend employment to you. Please note that the terms of your new employment, including pay and benefits, may be different from the current terms of your employment with THQ.

If you are an employee of an entity that is not included in the sale, we regret that your position will end. A small number of our headquarters staff will continue to be employed by THQ beyond January 25 to assist with the transition. THQ has sufficient resources to pay these employees

for work going forward, and we will be contacting these employees immediately to ensure their continued employment during this transition period. We are requesting the ability to offer certain severance pay to minimize disruption for employees of non-included entities as they determine the next steps in their careers.

We know you will have many questions about this news. We'll be meeting tomorrow when we return to talk through this announcement and to answer any questions you have. You will receive a benefits fact sheet and FAQs with answers to some questions that may be on your mind. Please review these materials closely.

The work that you all have done as part of the THQ family is imaginative, creative, artistic and highly valued by our loyal gamers. We are proud of what we have accomplished despite today's outcome.

It has been our privilege to work alongside the entire THQ team. While the company will cease to exist, we are heartened that the majority of our studios and games will continue under new ownership. We were hoping that the entire company would remain intact, but we expect to hear good news from each of the separate entities that will be operating as part of new organizations.

For those THQ employees who are part of entities that are not included in the sale, we are confident that the talent you have displayed as part of THQ will be recognized as you take the next steps in your career.

Thank you all for your dedication and for sharing your talent with the THQ team. We wish you the best of luck and hope you will keep in touch.

Sincerely,

Brian Farrell

Chief Executive Officer

Jason Rubin

President

Far from surprising news, but it's still sad to see a longtime publisher go under like this. Also of note is Vigil's absence. Signs as of right now point to the Darksiders developer ceasing to exist. We'll continue to update as news rolls in.

Take-Two Delays Launch of Grand Theft Auto V Video Game

Take-Two Interactive Software Inc said on Thursday it has pushed back the launch of the latest game from its hit "Grand Theft Auto" franchise to September 17 from its previously announced release window of spring 2013.

Shares of Take-Two were down six percent at \$12.31 in early afternoon trading on the Nasdaq.

The delay was to allow Take-Two's Rockstar Games studio, which develops "Grand Theft Auto" games, additional development time, the video game

company said.

"Grand Theft Auto V" will be released worldwide for Microsoft Corp's Xbox and Sony Corp's PlayStation3 game consoles on September 17, the company said.

The action-adventure game lets players complete criminal missions in urban settings. The franchise's last title "Grand Theft Auto IV" has sold over 25 million units since its release in 2008.

Grand Theft Auto V is set in a fictional city inspired by present-day Southern California.

The delayed launch pushes earnings from Grand Theft Auto V sales from June to September, Sterne Agee analyst Arvind Bhatia said. The new title of the massively popular franchise has the potential to rake in close to \$1 billion in retail sales and sell 15 to 20 million units, according to Bhatia.

"It adds to their development cost and it's launching closer to what we think is going to be a period where new consoles will be coming out and there will be more competition from other titles," Bhatia said.

The video game industry has been struggling to cope with flagging sales over the last year. Analysts say consumers are holding back from buying hardware and software as they wait for rumored next-generation versions of Sony Corp's PlayStation and Microsoft Corp's Xbox, expected later this year.

The delay could mean Take-Two is possibly creating a "cross-generation" title that could work on current and next-generation consoles, said analyst Mike Hickey of National Alliance Capital Markets.

"Remember, Xbox signed an exclusive deal with Rockstar at the beginning of the prior cycle for episodic content, and Sony provided exclusive resources for the completion of Grand Theft Auto IV," Hickey said.

==~==~==

A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

CNN Temporarily Blacked Out in China During Segment on NYT Hacking

Chinese censors temporarily blocked CNN International's broadcasting signal Thursday night, during a segment about Chinese hackers infiltrating the New York Times' computer network, a CNN spokeswoman told TheWrap.

On Wednesday night, the Times reported that it had suffered four months of persistent cyber attacks after publishing a front-page story about the wealth amassed by Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao's family.

CNNI reporter Hala Gorani aired a segment on her show about the hacking on Thursday. Her entire six-minute segment was blacked out in China.

It wasn't the first time CNN faced the wrath of Beijing's censors. Last May, Anderson Cooper's report on a blind dissident was blocked in the country.

Nor is it the first time CNN has been shunned by the Chinese.

In 2009, a 23-year-old student name Rao Jin started a website called Anti-CNN.com, on which he skewered the network and other Western media outlets for critical coverage of the Chinese government's actions in Tibet.

How China Justifies Its Cyber Attacks

Suppose that the United States government learned that a foreign newspaper planned to run a series of (true) articles that, in the judgment of its intelligence establishment, had the potential to create great collateral damage and hurt the ability of the president to prosecute its agenda. Any government in that position with that mindset would almost certainly order its intelligence apparatus to try to obtain advance notice about the content of the article as well as information that could be used to discredit the authors.

Although the U.S. government now regularly trolls through the transactional records of reporters to ferret out leaks (and also to potentially chill serious reporting on national security issues," the U.S. is not China in many ways; it would be hard to see how a president could order a cyber attack to protect his family from a reputational smear. But the political system in China is not a representative democracy; there is no tradition of press freedom; the government is much more fragile. So IF you're an intelligence analyst, it is, from your perspective, quite rational to New York Times expose about the President's ill-begotten money as a legitimate threat to the country.

What fascinates me about the exploits of officially sanctioned Chinese cyber attacks is how limited they are. The Times found that the hackers were interested in and only interested in what the Times would say about the Wen family. "Experts found no evidence that the intruders used the passwords to seek information that was not related to the Wen family." Read that again. Based on what our government tells us, we think the Chinese government's hacking efforts are indiscriminate. But they're not. The net is sometimes wide, but the hackers seem to play by their own peculiar set of rules. If a person has information that pertains to the security environment as perceived by the Chinese government, then they're fair game for computer network attack.

The United States plays by these informal rules too. Our NSA has probably broken into the e-mail accounts of journalists and human rights activists in other countries. The lawyers who supervise these covert operations probably make sure to place limitations on what our cyber-spies are able to gather and collect, all in the name of limiting both the footprint of the attack and the self-inspection that comes with snooping on anyone's e-mail.

Chinese cyber espionage is scary. It's also not surprising. The U.S. cannot easily claim the moral high ground.

U.S. Government Warns of Hack Threat to Network Gear

The Department of Homeland Security urged computer users on Tuesday to disable a common networking technology feature, after researchers warned that hackers could exploit flaws to gain access to tens of millions of vulnerable devices.

The U.S. government's Computer Emergency Readiness Team, on its website, advised consumers and businesses to disable a feature known as Universal Plug and Play or UPnP, and some other related features that make devices from computers to printers accessible over the open Internet.

UPnP, a communications protocol, is designed to let networks identify and communicate with equipment, reducing the amount of work it takes to set up networks. Dave Marcus, chief architect of advanced research and threat intelligence with Intel's McAfee unit, said hackers would have a "field day" once the vulnerability in network devices is exposed.

"Historically, these are amongst the last to be updated and protected properly which makes them a gold mine for potential abuse and exploitation," said Marcus, who advises government agencies and corporations on protections against sophisticated attacks.

Disabling UPnP once networks have already been set up, will have little impact on the operation of the devices.

The new security bugs were initially brought to the attention of the government by computer security company Rapid7, in Boston, which released a report on the problem on Tuesday. The company said it discovered between 40 million and 50 million devices that were vulnerable to attack due to three separate sets of problems that the firm's researchers have identified with the UPnP standard.

The flaws could allow hackers to access confidential files, steal passwords, take full control over PCs as well as remotely access devices such as webcams, printers and security systems, according to Rapid7.

Rapid7 has alerted electronics makers about the problem through the CERT Coordination Center, a group at the Carnegie Mellon Software Engineering Institute that helps researchers report vulnerabilities to affected companies.

"This is the most pervasive bug I've ever seen," said HD Moore, chief technology officer for Rapid7. He discussed the research with Reuters late on Monday.

CERT in turn has tried to contact the more than 200 companies whose products Rapid7 have identified as being vulnerable to attack, including Belkin, D-Link, Cisco Systems Inc's Linksys division and Netgear.

Linksys said it is aware of the problem. "We recommend Linksys customers visit our website to understand if their home router is affected, and learn how to disable UPnP through the user interface to avoid being impacted," Linksys said in a statement.

Belkin, D-Link and Netgear did not respond to requests for comment.

Chris Wysopal, chief technology officer of security software firm Veracode, said he believed that publication of Rapid7's findings would draw widespread attention to the still emerging area of UPnP security, prompting other security researchers to search for more bugs in UPnP.

"This definitely falls into the scary category," said Wysopal, who reviewed Rapid7's findings ahead of their publication. "There is going to be a lot more research on this. And the follow-on research could be a lot scarier."

Andres Andreu, chief architect at networking security company Bayshore Networks said they expect an increase in cybercrime as hackers begin to figure out ways to take advantage of the newly identified vulnerabilities.

"Simple targets such as home routers now become targets of greater interest," he said.

Moore said that there were bugs in most of the devices that Rapid7 tested and that device manufacturers will need to release software updates to remedy the problems.

He said that was unlikely to happen quickly.

In the meantime, he advised computer users to quickly use a free tool released by Rapid7 to identify vulnerable gear, then disable the UPnP functionality in that equipment.

Moore said hackers have not widely exploited the UPnP vulnerabilities to launch attacks, but both Moore and Wysopal expected they may start to do so after the findings are publicized.

Still, Moore said he decided to disclose the flaws in a bid to pressure equipment makers to fix the bugs and generally pay more attention to security.

People who own devices with UPnP enabled may not be aware of it because new routers, printers, media servers, Web cameras, storage drives and "smart" or Web-connected TVs are often shipped with that functionality turned on by default.

"You can't stay silent about something like this," he said. "These devices seem to have had the same level of core security for decades. Nobody seems to really care about them."

Veracode's Wysopal said that some hackers have likely already exploited the flaws to launch attacks, but in relatively small numbers, choosing victims one at a time.

"If they are going after executives and government officials, then they will probably look for their home networks and exploit this vulnerability," he said.

Google Inc has offered to change some of its business practices to appease European competition authorities and avoid billions of dollars in fines.

The European Commission said on Friday it had received detailed proposals from the world's most popular search engine, which has been under investigation for two years following complaints from more than a dozen companies, including Microsoft, that Google has used its market power to block rivals.

If the Commission accepts the proposals under its settlement procedure, it would mean no fine and no finding of wrongdoing against Google.

Companies found to be in breach of EU rules can be fined as much as 10 percent of global turnover, which could mean up to \$4 billion if there is no resolution in Google's case.

EU Competition Commissioner Joaquin Almunia declined to give details of the proposal but told Reuters: "We are analyzing it".

Google spokesman Al Verney said the group continues to work cooperatively with the commission.

Google's offer includes labeling its own services in search results to make them stand out from rival services and also imposing fewer restrictions on advertisers, according to people familiar with the matter, who declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue.

They said the proposed deal does not mention the way Google enforces its patents against competitors as the company has already agreed with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission that it would no longer seek sales bans when suing companies which infringe on key patents.

The FTC ended its investigation last month without any action, handing Google a major victory.

Google ranks first in Internet searching in Europe, with an 82 percent market share, versus 67 percent in the United States, according to research firm comScore.

Lobbying group ICOMP, whose members include complainants Microsoft, Foundem, Hot-map, Streetmap and Nextag, said any solution should include measures ensuring that rivals could compete on a level playing field with Google.

The FairSearch coalition, whose members include online travel agencies and complainants Expedia and TripAdvisor, said a third-party monitor should be appointed to ensure that Google lives up to any promises.

The Commission, which acts as competition regulator in the 27-member European Union, is now expected to seek feedback from Google's rivals and other interested parties, before launching an official market test.

The Commission has said Google may have favored its own search services over those of rivals, and copied travel and restaurant reviews from competing sites without permission.

The EU executive is also concerned the company may have put restrictions on advertisers and advertising to prevent them from moving their online

campaigns to competing search engines.

Microsoft Sued Over Search-related Patents

A lawsuit filed on Thursday alleges Microsoft Corp has been infringing patents that allow Internet search engines to most effectively place advertisements.

I/P Engine Inc said in the suit filed in Manhattan federal court that Microsoft uses search technology based on inventions by two employees of I/P Engine's parent company, Vringo Inc.

Microsoft uses the technology in systems that generate advertisements and associated links for users of the world's largest software company's search engine, Bing, the lawsuit said.

Microsoft did not immediately respond to a request for comment. A spokesman for Vringo declined to comment.

In November 2012, a Virginia jury awarded I/P Engine approximately \$30 million in damages after it found that companies including Google Inc and AOL Inc had infringed the same patents that are at issue in the Microsoft suit.

Following I/P Engine's announcement of the verdict, however, its parent company's stock slid by as much as 10 percent. The company had been seeking damages of at least \$696 million.

In the lawsuit filed Thursday, I/P Engine claimed that Microsoft has willfully infringed its patents. I/P Engine said that one of its patents was referenced by the U.S. Patent and Trade Office in 2003 when the agency rejected a similar Microsoft patent application.

In patent cases, a party can win higher damages if infringement is found to be willful.

Vringo shares were last up 10 cents, or 3.2 percent, at \$3.24 in midday trade on the American Stock Exchange.

Microsoft shares were down 30 cents, or 1.1 percent, at \$27.55 on the Nasdaq.

The case is I/P Engine, Inc v. Microsoft Corp, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, No. 12-688.

Twitter Has 2nd Outage in a Month

For the second time this month, Twitter has experienced an outage.

While service has been restored, many experienced issues accessing Twitter.com and Twitter's third-party mobile applications earlier this morning.

Twitter's new video sharing service, Vine, also experienced a service

disruption.

"Some users may be experiencing issues accessing Twitter. Our engineers are currently working to resolve the issue," Twitter posted on its status blog at 10:25 a.m. ET on Thursday.

After resolving the issues Twitter said that users "experienced intermittent issues" for close to three hours. "This incident has now been resolved. We apologize to users who were affected by this, and we're working to ensure that similar issues do not occur," it said.

Just 10 days earlier, on Inauguration day, Twitter had the same issue. Many were unable to send 140-character messages or get to the site.

Twitter used to be infamous for such periodic outages and the appearance of the "fail whale" error page, which many are seeing today. It has substantially improved its server capacity in the past two years. However, in July there were similar widespread outages.

Google Offers \$3.14159 Million in Hacking Prizes

Whoever successfully cracks Google's Chrome operating system at this year's Pwnium hacking contest will walk away with a piece of the pi.

Google, which had previously offered totals of \$1 million, then \$2 million, in prizes for successful hacks, is upping the ante at the contest, to be held in March at the CanSecWest security conference in Vancouver, B.C. The company is offering a total of \$3.14159 million in cash rewards.

That's a nod to pi, math's most intriguing irrational number, and to the added challenges that come with cracking Google's ever-improving security measures.

It's unlikely that any single hacker will get the whole pi. Instead, many contestants could win \$110,000 for each temporary compromise of Chrome OS, or \$150,000 for each compromise that survives a system reboot.

All exploits must be delivered via webpages on a basic-model Samsung 550 Chromebook using a Wi-Fi connection.

"We believe these larger rewards reflect the additional challenge involved with tackling the security defenses of Chrome OS, compared to traditional operating systems," Google Chrome developer Chris Evans wrote on the official Chromium blog.

Google's previous two Pwnium contests, last March at CanSecWest 2012 and last October at the Hack in the Box conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, were for successful exploits of its Chrome browser, not the similarly named OS.

Google created Pwnium last year as an alternative to the longer-running Pwn2Own contest, also held at CanSecWest, after Pwn2Own temporarily changed its rules so that successful crackers no longer needed to reveal their methods.

That change was a bonus for commercial hackers such as the French company

VUPEN, which specializes in keeping exploits secret and selling the information only to the highest bidders.

This year, the full-disclosure rules are back in effect at Pwn2Own, and Google is back as a co-sponsor, along with Hewlett-Packard.

But since the Chrome browser is one of the targets at Pwn2Own, Google's having the Pwnium participants across the hall take aim at the company's new operating system instead.

Unlike Pwn2Own, Pwnium doesn't require contestants to use their real names. A teenager known only as Pinkie Pie, after the "My Little Pony" character, has won \$60,000 at each Pwnium contest held so far.

Google touts Chrome OS as the most secure operating system on the market. Yet its market share is so small that the OS hasn't truly been field-tested in the real world.

It's noteworthy, however, that the Pwn2Own prize for cracking the Chrome browser is \$100,000, as opposed to \$60,000 for Mozilla Firefox and \$65,000 for Apple Safari.

Cracking Internet Explorer 10 running on Windows 8 yields \$100,000 at Pwn2Own; IE 9 on Windows 7 is worth \$75,000.

Pwn2Own winners also get to keep the contest-provided laptops used in their successful hacks.

The Pwnium rules don't mention if winners can keep their Chromebooks, but since Google sells the machines for a relatively inexpensive \$450, the company probably won't mind.

Google has never had to pay out the full amount offered for Chrome browser cracks, and it's unlikely that it'll be writing checks totaling \$3.15149 million for the operating-system hacks. But the Pwnium publicity probably won't hurt efforts to drum up buzz about Chrome OS.

Microsoft Releases Office 365 Home Premium

Microsoft Corp. today announced worldwide availability of Office 365 Home Premium, a reinvention of the company's flagship Office product line for consumers. Office 365 Home Premium is a cloud service designed for busy households and people juggling ever-increasing work and family responsibilities. The new offering includes the latest and most complete set of Office applications; works across up to five devices, including Windows tablets, PCs and Macs; and comes with extra SkyDrive storage and Skype calling all for US\$99.99 for an annual subscription, the equivalent of US\$8.34 per month.

Today's launch of Office 365 Home Premium marks the next big step in Microsoft's transformation to a devices and services business, said Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft. This is so much more than just another release of Office. This is Office reinvented as a consumer cloud service with all the full-featured Office applications people know and love, together with impressive new cloud and social benefits.

Microsoft also announced it will now deliver many new features and

services to the cloud first, transforming the company's traditional three-year release cycle. Now, new features and services stream to subscribers as soon as they are ready, keeping subscribers always up to date while eliminating the hassles of upgrading.

This is a major leap forward, said Kurt DelBene, president of the Microsoft Office Division. People's needs change rapidly, and Office 365 Home Premium will change with them.

Simultaneously, Microsoft today released Office 365 University for college or university students, faculty and staff at a price of just US\$79.99 for a four-year subscription – the equivalent of US\$1.67 per month. Globally, the company also released updated versions of the traditional Office suite: Office Home and Student 2013, Office Home and Business 2013 and Office Professional 2013. Office 365 for businesses will be released globally with new capabilities on Feb. 27.

In a recent global survey,* nearly 60 percent of people said they don't have the time to do the things they want to do, and more than 80 percent said they could save one or more hours a day if they were better organized. Office 365 Home Premium is designed to help people be more productive from virtually anywhere and find the flexibility to do the things they want.

Between kids and career, I'm never completely at home or completely at work – and thanks to technology, that suits me just fine, said Jen Singer, an author, blogger and mom of two teen boys. With Office 365 Home Premium, I can work around my kids' schedules, so I can drive the soccer carpool, coordinate errands while at a doctor's office and still hit my deadlines at work. And, with one subscription for everyone in my family, it's an absolute steal.

To help people find more time to do the things they want, Microsoft is introducing Time to 365 (<http://www.office.com/timeto365>), a new crowd-sourced website where people can find and share tips, tricks, ideas and inspiration from around the world. Contributors include experts such as tech-savvy pro Janna Robinson (<http://www.jannarobinson.com>) and everyday working parents who have found ways to simplify their lives. Tips on the site include, for example, an idea for organizing your grocery list with OneNote on your phone, a pointer on how to pick the right-sized TV for your living room, and ways to use Office applications to help plan a child's birthday party.

Office 365 Home Premium is available in 162 markets in 21 languages and includes the following:

The latest and most complete set of Office applications: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, Outlook, Publisher and Access

One license for the entire household to use Office on up to five devices, including Windows tablets, PCs or Macs, and Office on Demand available from any Internet-connected PC**

An additional 20 GB of SkyDrive cloud storage, nearly three times the amount available with a free SkyDrive account

60 free Skype world calling minutes per month to call mobile phones, landlines or PCs around the world***

Future upgrades, so you always use the latest time-saving technology

People can learn more about Office 365 Home Premium or try it free for 30 days at <http://www.office.com>.

Founded in 1975, Microsoft is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential.

* Microsoft surveyed more than 10,000 people in over 20 countries.

** App availability varies by operating system, device and language.

*** Skype world minutes not available in all countries. Calls to select countries.

Apple Confirms It Will Cease Shipping Mac Pro in Europe

Apple has been forced to remove the Mac Pro from sale in Europe after an amendment to a safety regulation left the professional Mac non-compliant.

Today the company has reached out to its sales and channel partners to confirm that orders for the Mac Pro must be placed by 18 February as the company will be unable to ship the model to these countries from the 1 March.

Apple told Macworld that the amendment to the IEC 60950-1 regulation increases requirements around electrical port protection and the fan guards in the system.

The Mac Pro met the previous standards prior to the amendment 1 addition. Apple told us that it considers the Mac Pro to be a very safe and very reliable product.

At issue are the large fans within the Mac Pro. Since they are unprotected, it would be possible to touch the fan blades.

According to Apple, the new requirements necessitate fan guards and some increased protection on the ports on the electrical system.

The Amendment 1 of regulation IEC 60950-1, Second Edition goes into effect on 1 March throughout the EU countries and the EFTA trade zone.

Apple told Macworld that it wished to warn customers and partners about the change so that they would have sufficient time to order Mac Pro units and meet any needs prior to 1 March.

Apple confirmed that the deadline for orders would be 18 February since it will need to ship units by 28 February.

If customers and channel partners wish to purchase a Mac Pro they must order by 18 February to ensure delivery prior to 1 March.

Apple emphasised that reseller partners will be able to continue to sell Mac Pro products that they have in inventory after 1 March. However, Apple won't be able to ship its pro Mac into those countries. Concerns about future of Mac Pro

News that Apple is taking the Mac Pro off sale in Europe will no doubt raise concerns from the professional Mac market. While the Mac Pro received a minor update following WWDC last summer, the last significant update was in 2010 and that has led to speculation that Apple will retire the Mac Pro.

However, Apple CEO Tim Cook laid concerns to rest in an email to a customer last year in which he stated:

"Our Pro customers like you are really important to us. Although we didn't have a chance to talk about a new Mac Pro at today's event, don't worry as we're working on something really great for later next year. We also updated the current model today."

The IEC 60950-1 amendment 1 applies to EU countries and EFTA states who follow those requirements.

This means that the full list of countries includes:

EU countries:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

Countries on the road to EU membership:

Croatia, Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey

European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries:

Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland

Apple emphasised that countries outside of these areas are not impacted and Mac Pro will continue to be available worldwide.

The company also confirmed that it would continue to support the hardware and software so that customers who require service parts or have any issues should have no concerns as far as maintaining parts and existing equipment.

Apple also emphasised that the Mac Pro is the only Mac product affected by this. "Our entire Mac line is compliant with this amendment 1 standard, with the exception of Mac Pro," said the company.

Apple sent the following communication to the channel

Mac Pro no longer sold in EU Countries after March 1, 2013

As of March 1, 2013, Apple will no longer sell Mac Pro in EU, EU candidate and EFTA countries because these systems are not compliant with Amendment 1 of regulation IEC 60950-1, Second Edition which becomes effective on this date. Apple resellers can continue to sell any remaining inventory of Mac Pro after March 1.

Apple will take final orders for Mac Pro from resellers up until February 18th for shipment before March 1, 2013.

Countries outside of the EU are not impacted and Mac Pro will continue to be available in those areas.

Apple Announces iPad With Double Storage Capacity

Apple Inc said on Tuesday that it will sell a version of its iPad tablet computer with 128 gigabytes of storage, which is twice the capacity of its existing models.

Apple, which has sold more than 120 million iPads so far, said that the new iPad will go on sale February 5, in black or white, for a suggested retail price of \$799 for the iPad with just Wi-Fi model, and \$929 for the version that also has a cellular wireless connection.

64 GB Surface Pro Will Only Have 23 GB Free?

A company spokesperson has confirmed to The Verge that the 64GB edition of Surface Pro will have 23GB of free storage out of the box. The 128GB model will have 83GB of free storage. It appears that the Windows 8 install, built-in apps, and a recovery partition will make up the 41GB total on the base Surface Pro model.

Computers, tablets, and smartphones have always had less usable space than their advertised storage capacities because of preinstalled software.

If your computer's 1 TB hard drive has 50 GB of preinstalled software and unusable space, you still have 95% of its space for user storage, which is hard to complain about. But advertising a 64 GB Surface Pro that only has 35% of its space available to the user is a very different story.

This is deceptive enough advertising that the FTC should consider taking action. As tablets become more computer-like and mobile OSes get larger, this is only going to get worse.

Everyone should play by the same rules. A proposal: storage capacities referenced or implied in the names or advertisements for personal computers, tablets, and smartphones should not exceed the amount of space available for end-user installation of third-party² applications and data, after enough software has been installed to enable all commonly advertised functionality.³

With today's OSes, iPads could advertise capacities no larger than 12, 28, 60, and 124 GB and the Surface Pros could be named 23 and 83 GB.

If those numbers don't sound as good, or the manufacturers don't leave themselves any room for OS-update expansion without changing the names of their products mid-cycle, that's their problem to solve, not ours.

To prevent manufacturers from getting around this by dropping the GB and just using model numbers that imply a size, e.g. the iPad 32 and iPad 64 . ?

To prevent manufacturers from cheating by shipping devices with

minimal OS installs that require additional downloads to get functionality that almost every user would want or expect to be there already.

To prevent, for example, Microsoft from excluding the size of Office from the Surface or Apple excluding the size of iBooks from iOS devices.

Steam for Linux Is in Open Beta

IconIt seems to have so far escaped OSNews' notice (if the top few hits for a site-search for 'Steam' is any indication) that Steam for Linux is now in Open Beta; you can get the Linux steam client from steampowered.com. So far, they appear to only be making an Ubuntu .deb available, and the client will require closed-source GPU drivers in order to work.

It bears repeating that the limited distribution availability fits with Valve's primary objective in porting Steam to linux - enabling an Ubuntu-Linux-based Steambox. It remains to be seen if Valve will provide packages for other distributions, but I won't be shocked if they don't - or if they do as Dropbox, Skype and Google have done, and provide packages only for the latest Ubuntu and Fedora distributions. So users of slightly more obscure distributions (I'm using Mint/Debian here at school) are S.O.L., and can probably expect to be so for a while.

In the grand OSNews tradition, now that I've said a few words about what is ostensibly the topic, I'd like to take a moment to prance, preen and provoke.

As of right now, getting actual games to work will require installing the proprietary drivers for your platform. There are several possible reasons that this could be the case, among them that the proprietary drivers are known to offer slightly higher 3D performance. However, I strongly suspect that there is one major reason for the requirement; on most platforms, the closed-source drivers will provide a GL3+ context, while the open-source drivers still provide a GL2.1 context.

This should be an embarrassment for all parties concerned; we (by which I mean, the community of Linux users, developers and enthusiasts; I am not a developer or distributor) are still shipping on modern systems a graphics API that is now six years old, and that was superseded four years ago. I had to check Wikipedia for my chronology; GL2.1 was 2006, and 3.0 was 2008. GL4.3 is the current standard. And yet, on the shiney, new Fedora 18 install I set up a few days ago, I get GL2.1, in spite of my somewhat-recent Radeon 6650.

This in particular points up Gallium's failure to live up to its promise. The entire point, as far as I understood it, of moving to Gallium was to avoid replicating the OpenGL interface layer across all drivers needlessly; the idea was that, once there was an OpenGL3 state tracker, all Gallium drivers would be able to use it, and we'd all get OpenGL3 cheaply. That clearly has not happened.

Facebook Is About to Save This 'Gay' Dog from Being Euthanized

This dog was surrendered to the Jackson Rabies Control Animal Shelter in Tennessee on Tuesday entirely because his owner saw him mounting another male dog and thought the pitbull/American bulldog mix was homosexual. The dog was scheduled to be put down at 1 p.m. today ... until some sane people on Facebook got involved. Jackson Rabies Control explained the circumstances on a Facebook posting that went up last night:

This guy was signed over to RC, not bc he's mean or bc he tears things up, but because... His owner says he's gay! He hunched another male dog so his owner threw him away bc he refuses to have a "gay" dog! Even if that weren't the most assinine thing I've ever heard, its still discrimination! Don't let this gorgeous dog die bc his owner is ignorant of normal dog behavior! He's in kennel 10L and he WILL be put down tomorrow bc there is no room at the inn!

"Assinine" is putting it mildly. The anti-gay (dog) owner was not only bigoted, but he also didn't realize that dogs often mount each other to show dominance which is likely what this pooch was doing. The shelter's Facebook post has since been shared over 3,000 times and received more than 500 likes, and the viral rescue seems to have worked: As of this morning, it looks like a woman named Stephanie Fryns, who is affiliated with the no-kill shelter Woof Connections, is literally knocking on the shelter's door:

We tried calling the shelter, but its voicemail box was full, and now we're just getting a busy signal so they're definitely getting an earful in Jackson. But it looks like Fryns is at the ready!

=~::~~::~=

Atari Online News, Etc. is a weekly publication covering the entire Atari community. Reprint permission is granted, unless otherwise noted at the beginning of any article, to Atari user groups and not for profit publications only under the following terms: articles must remain unedited and include the issue number and author at the top of each article reprinted. Other reprints granted upon approval of request. Send requests to: dpj@atarinews.org

No issue of Atari Online News, Etc. may be included on any commercial media, nor uploaded or transmitted to any commercial online service or internet site, in whole or in part, by any agent or means, without the expressed consent or permission from the Publisher or Editor of Atari Online News, Etc.

Opinions presented herein are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the staff, or of the publishers. All material herein is believed to be accurate at the time of publishing.